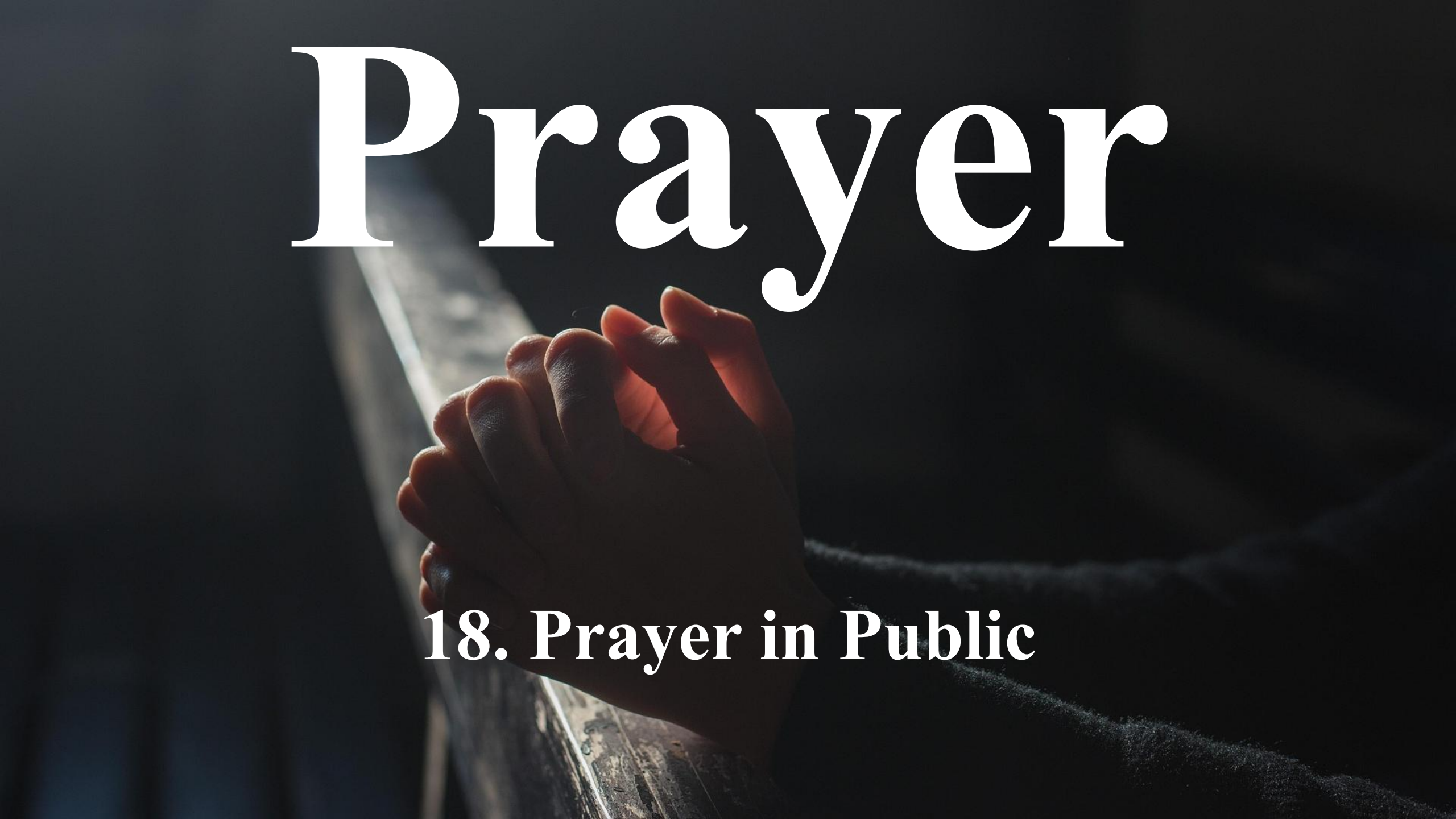

Prayer

18. Prayer in Public

Matthew 6:5 "And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward."

Meaning: Public prayer is not wrong, if it is done right. Jesus, Solomon, David, and Elijah, all prayed in public, but they never lost focus of the One to Whom they were praying. When we pray in public, we are not praying to man, but to God. When our prayers are made to be seen and heard by man, we have gained an empty reward. Public prayer offered in pride is an abomination to God.

Application: We must pray publicly with humility. The story of the Pharisee and the publican is a good reminder of how we should pray. "The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself" and he was the only one who heard it. "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble" (James 4:6). Public prayer should lead others to an audience with God over specific matters without drawing attention to self. Pride will make public prayer ineffective for the offerer and the one for whom the prayer is offered.

Other Verses for Study: II Chronicles 6:13-15; 7:14; Psalm 42:4; 95:6; Proverbs 16:5; Matthew 18:20; Luke 18:9-14; Acts 1:13, 14; 20:36

1. We must pray publicly with _____.
2. What will make public prayer ineffective?

_____

3. What kind of person likes to pray to be seen of men?

_____

"Pride, self-esteem, and self-praise effectually shut the door of prayer."